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**DeNUCCI SAYS MASS PIKE HAS TAKEN STEPS
TO IMPROVE SECURITY AND RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES**

State Auditor Joe DeNucci, in a continuing series of homeland security audits, reported today that the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MTA) has made much progress but needs to take further steps to ensure protection of its assets and roadways, including the Big Dig.

According to DeNucci's report, the MTA has taken several actions since the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to address its vulnerabilities, including working with the State Police to identify threats and develop an emergency response plan. The Authority has increased access control to MTA roadways and facilities, developed a project-wide security system, appointed a security director, and coordinated terrorism awareness training. The Authority also developed an Emergency Management Plan in 2003, which defines actions to prevent, respond to and recover from threats or emergencies. The MTA has spent nearly \$12 million on homeland security.

Although the plan identified a prioritized listing of vulnerable sites, the audit concluded that it needs updating and that the MTA should complete the steps to be taken in the event of an emergency. DeNucci's review indicated that training, drills and exercises need to be scheduled as well as the implementation of a formal monitoring program to ensure that the Emergency Management Plan is functioning as intended.

"Overall, the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority has been responsive to this critical issue and has accomplished much, but the Authority should continue to take all necessary steps to complete its emergency management program," said DeNucci.

DeNucci's audit noted the authority's request for more than \$2.3 million in federal homeland security grants was denied by the state's Executive Office of Public Safety (EOPS), leaving some of these needs unmet.

"The Turnpike Authority should continue its efforts to secure federal homeland security funds to satisfy these vital public safety needs," concluded DeNucci.